POLS 497: Undergraduate Leadership Development Seminar

Spring 2014
Fridays, 2:00-4:00 (on selected dates) - DuSable 464

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Office hours: By appointment

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”
- John Quincy Adams

“Divorced from ethics, leadership is reduced to management and politics to mere technique.”
- James MacGregor Burns

“There’s nothing more demoralizing than a leader who can’t clearly articulate why we’re doing what we’re doing.”
- James Kouzes and Barry Posner

“The most important single ingredient in the formula is knowing how to get along with people.”
- Theodore Roosevelt

Course Description and Goals:
For governments, businesses, universities, sports teams, just about anything you can think of, to succeed there must be people who can provide effective leadership. When a void in leadership exists, businesses go bankrupt, universities fail to educate, sports teams lose, and, most extreme, governments collapse. But what makes a strong, effective leader? As the quotations above illustrate, there are numerous views—some of which conflict—regarding the characteristics of a strong, effective leader. Moreover, the same traits that make a person a good leader in one situation may not be effective in another context. The leadership qualities of a successful university president are likely different from those of a successful quarterback, those of a successful businessperson differ from those of a government leader. And it is not clear that there is one “correct” way to be a leader even for similar positions and environments. For example, two university presidents could be equally successful yet have very different leadership styles. In this course, we will examine different leadership styles by discussing leadership with people from different backgrounds (e.g., academia, government, athletics, and law).

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Recognize traits that seem to be universally accepted as necessary for strong leadership
- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of different leadership styles
- Comprehend how effective leadership may change depending on the situation and the profession
- Assess their own qualities as a leader and begin to develop a personal leadership model
Required reading:

This book is available at the NIU bookstore, although you will likely find a cheaper version of the book at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

Requirements: You will receive two grades over the course of the semester.

*Attendance and participation (50%)*: Since this class is a seminar, students are expected to attend and be active participants in the discussions with our guest speakers. Students will be allowed one *excused* absence. Any unexcused absence or more than one excused absence will result in a 0 for the participation grade. If students expect to miss a class, they must contact the professor before class.

In general, relevant in-class participation will be evaluated according to the following scale (with plus and minus grades being possible):

- A = regular and thoughtful participation
- B = occasional and thoughtful participation
- C = regular attendance, but little or no participation

*Paper (50%)*: Students must write a 6-8 page paper in which they conduct a critical assessment of the guest speakers and begin to develop a personal leadership model. They should consider, but are not limited to, the following questions. What similarities and differences were evident in the different leadership styles? What aspects were particularly effective and why? Most importantly, what elements from the speakers and the book do you see yourself incorporating in your leadership model? When writing the paper, be sure to tie in Maxwell’s book when discussing the different leadership styles. *Students who do not incorporate Maxwell will receive a significant reduction in their paper grades.* The paper is due at the beginning of class on April 25th. Students will be docked one full letter grade for each day (including weekends) the paper is late.

Grading Scale:

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<tr>
<th>% Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93%-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>83%-87.4%</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>70%-77.4%</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>90%-92.9%</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>80%-82.9%</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>60%-69.9%</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>87.5%-89.9%</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77.5%-79.9%</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than 60%</td>
<td>F</td>
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Course Outline:

**January 24**

*Overview of Leadership*

Dr. Streb

**February 21**

*Leadership in Government*

Congresswoman Robin Kelly

Illinois 2nd District
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Speaker/Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 28</td>
<td>Leadership in Academia</td>
<td>Dr. Douglas Baker, President, Northern Illinois University</td>
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<td>March 21</td>
<td>Leadership in Business and Law</td>
<td>Dr. Kenneth Chessick, CEO, Restaurant.com, Law Offices of Kenneth Chessick, M.D.</td>
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<td>April 18</td>
<td>Leadership in Athletics</td>
<td>Mr. Sean Frazier, Associate Vice-President/Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, Northern Illinois University</td>
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<td>April 25</td>
<td>Course Conclusion</td>
<td>PAPER DUE!</td>
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